

## BALL ON THE WALL



Ball on the Wall, which mimics a squat, is an advanced exercise that strengthens the whole leg in everyday ways. Balloons or balls create the need for wobble control by core muscles, facilitate upright posture, and provide kinesthetic sensation.

### ***Benefits »***

- ⦿ Adds more balance and kinesthetic work to the common squat.
- ⦿ Builds leg strength.
- ⦿ Increases core strength and awareness.

### ***Set It Up »***

You will need stability balls, Slo Mo balls, or balloons, and a clear, safe space along a wall or in a corner.

### ***How to Do It »***

#### **The Start**

- ⦿ Participants stand with their back to a wall or a corner. Place the stability ball behind them in the small of their back. Smaller balloons or balls can be placed at shoulder blade level.
- ⦿ Tell participants to press their back against the ball. Use these cues.
  - Can you feel your stomach tighten? Good, now brace your abdominal wall.
  - Draw your shoulder blades back and down.
  - Press your back into the ball and keep that position.
  - Inhale to prepare.



#### **The Moves**

- ⦿ Keeping pressure on the ball, participants exhale and lower themselves into a shallow squat.
- ⦿ Check their position:
  - Knees over ankles—don't let them move forward over or past the toes.
  - If the knees go past the toes, step out a little farther from the wall for the next squat.
  - Are shoulders level?
  - Is the core braced?
- ⦿ Come up again.
- ⦿ Repeat 8 to 15 times, as able.

### ***Give It More Balance »***

- ⦿ Add arm lifts: With each squat, lift one arm up, reaching overhead.
- ⦿ Lift one heel: Lifting one heel makes the heel-down leg do most of the work and requires more balance control.

### ***Take It Further »***

Have your participants do Ball on the Wall With a Twist. This activity is advanced and requires closer spotting. It's simply a ball squat with torso rotation added. Cue the torso rotation as rolling one shoulder blade onto the ball with each descent, coming back to the middle position on ascent. Practice the rolling motion before adding the squat. Cue participants also to keep the core muscles braced. The exercise looks like a bear in the woods scratching his back on a tree (stability ball).

- ⦿ Stand with your back against the ball.
- ⦿ Both feet are flat, core muscles are braced, and forearms are crossed on the chest.
- ⦿ Inhale to prepare.
- ⦿ Exhale. Push the back against the ball and maintain this pressure throughout the squat.
- ⦿ Slide down the wall, turning the torso, arms, head, and neck to one side with each squat.
- ⦿ Lead with the arms to help pull the torso into the greatest rotation that is comfortable.
- ⦿ The torso rotation should look like a spool of thread turning on its bobbin. There is no bending of the back; just rotation.

### ***Keep It Safe »***

I think that this activity should be done one person at a time or in private training sessions. Putting the ball in a corner makes it safer because the ball will stay in place better and because corners provide two-sided balance support. If you decide to try the twisted version, teach the rotation first without the squat. Supervise closely until the participant is comfortable.

### ***Live It »***

With Ball on the Wall, 10 squats a day will keep the walker away!